

October 2001

## Program manager to receive small business honors

by Conrad Dziewulski, Directed Energy Directorate

KIRTLAND AFB, N.M. – The manager of an office responsible for attracting small business applicable to research projects at two Air Force Research Laboratory directorates received the U. S. Small Business Administration recognition Oct. 2 in Washington, D.C.

Robert D. Hancock, program manager of the Small Business Innovation Research office received the Tibbetts Award for advancing small business participation in directed energy and space vehicle research.

Hancock, who has headed the program for the Directed Energy and Space Vehicles Directorates since 1986, guides research proposals through three stages starting from the concept phase to the “ultimate success,” a commercial or military product.

“Bob pays attention to details and works the program,” said Dr. William P. Latham, technical advisor with the Directed Energy Directorate’s Laser Effects Research Branch, who nominated Hancock for the award.

Each year the defense department publishes a list of research topics or requirements for the armed forces. Last year’s list contained 230 Air Force research topics from the laboratory’s 10 directorates, addressing requirements from throughout the service’s acquisition community.

Hancock explained he receives about 400 small business proposals annually in response to approximately 60 topics from the two directorates. “We try to attract small business to work with the directorates and the system program offices such as the Airborne Laser,” he said.

Hancock noted the first two phases are limited by dollar and time, “Phase I is intended to establish concept feasibility at a maximum cost of \$100,000 spread over nine months. Phase II, which is the principle research and development phase and may result in a prototype demonstration is typically a two-year, \$750,000 contract.”

If all the pieces fall into place as hoped, Phase III results in the final development of a product, process or even a service for sale in the military and/or private sector.

The program has grown from approximately \$10 million in 1992 to nearly \$50 million annually for the two directorates.



**TIBBETTS AWARD RECIPIENT** — Robert D. Hancock, program manager of the Small Business Innovation Research office explains how his office attracts small business involvement with research proposals for the Air Force Research Laboratory’s Directed Energy and Space Vehicles Directorates.

Two of the program’s more successful enterprises are “CSA Engineering, a California firm, which developed a vibrations control system for the Airborne Laser was made a member of the program’s integrated planning team.” “Additionally, Albuquerque firm, SVS Incorporated, produced a successful pointing and tracking system was recently bought out by Boeing.”

“We have fostered a wide range of promising technologies in directed energy, space and launch vehicles, remote, sensing, medicine and law enforcement,” Hancock said.

The award is named for Roland Tibbetts who spearheaded the program while with the administration. Sixty-nine firms and individuals from 39 states and the District of Columbia will be recognized this year. @